

## **Bath International Foundation Year**

### **Information for Prospective Pharmacy (MPharm) Students**

To fully qualify as a registered pharmacist in the UK it is necessary to undertake a one year work placement (pre-reg year) after graduating from the four year MPharm degree.

Until recently there has been a high demand and a shortage of trained pharmacists in the UK and so international students did not have difficulty in obtaining an appropriate pre-registration placement with the UK's large pharmacy companies who saw overseas students as an ideal recruiting pool for their organisations.

This pre-reg year must be done in the UK and most countries do not allow UK graduates into their own professional training year even if they are nationals 'returning home'.

However, the situation regarding international students taking/about to take UG Pharmacy in the UK is changing because:

- Pharmacy is now no longer a shortage subject. There are economic cuts and also 6 more schools of Pharmacy and so there are fewer placements and higher competition. Visa extensions (at the end of PSW) are perceived as unlikely to be granted for a non-shortage subject which a UK national could also do.
- The new style Post Study Work visa requires an income of 21K. This income is only likely in hospital (not community pharmacy).
- The UK's two biggest retail pharmacists are Lloyds and Boots. Lloyds have already announced that they will not offer pre-reg to overseas nationals. Boots seems to be following suit-though less open about it.
- The situation will not improve as Pharmacy will ultimately (next 2-3 years) become a 5 year degree with the placement (s) within the degree and will have a quota for overseas (as do Medicine/Dentistry).

Graduates can do other jobs: Teaching (Biology/Chemistry); Industry; PhDs and research; product licensing and drug information but obviously most are interested in clinical practice.

The International Foundation Year will continue to recruit and enrol students onto the MPharmacy course but we must point out that students must understand that the chances of gaining a full Pharmacy registration and training in the UK after the IFY are now slim.

Dear Potential Pharmacy Student,

On the 26th June 2012 the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) announced that the RPS Pharmacy Professional Sponsorship Scheme (PPSS) had been formally approved by the UK Borders Agency (UKBA) and the Department of Health.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society Pharmacy Professional Sponsorship Scheme (PPSS) is designed to enable overseas pharmacy students currently studying at schools of pharmacy in Great Britain to complete their training by undertaking their pre-registration year in Great Britain (GB) before returning to their home countries to register and practise.

The PPSS has been established as an immigration category under Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) of the UK Border Agency's points based immigration system. As the licensed overarching sponsor of the scheme, the RPS is supporting overseas pharmacy graduates from GB schools of pharmacy to complete their pre-registration trainee pharmacist training. The scheme has been approved by the UKBA and the Department of Health.

This scheme applies to individuals from overseas (outside of the European Union (EU)) who have graduated or will graduate with an MPharm from a School of Pharmacy in Great Britain between 2012 and 2015. Within the current agreement there is no provision for visas for the pharmacy pre-registration training after 2015. Those graduating after 2015 will have to return to their home countries upon graduating from the MPharm program and will not be able to undertake pre-registration training and will therefore not be able to complete the requirements for professional registration within the UK.

The current arrangements will no doubt be reviewed within the next four years. Unfortunately however, the RPS has indicated it is unlikely to be extended. Overseas students should therefore ensure that they will be able to continue their training back within their own countries and ensure that their home countries pharmacy professional body will recognise a UK pharmacy (MPharm) degree.

Yours Sincerely

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